

Greedy 5.10

# Artist disputes removal of collage depicting gay life in America

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**GREELEY** • When does a display of gay art that includes real-life comments about gays become too real?

That is the question raised by organizers of an art show who removed a multimedia collage by Sharon McEachern of Denver.

The artwork, titled "Yes," shows photos of nationally known gays, including Martina Navratilova, Ellen DeGeneres, Episcopal Bishop V. Gene Robinson and slain college student Matthew Shepard.

Next to the photos are pictures of people with disapproving faces and Scrabble letters spelling shame, hate, scorn and fear and epithets for gays.

"I don't have the stomach to

describe it to you. It had every ugly word you could imagine to describe homosexuals. Our first impression was that it was anti-gay," said Joe Tennesen, senior vice president for culture enhancement for New Frontier Bank. The bank was the venue for the 41st annual show, which ended May 1.

McEachern said the piece tries to show what it is like to be gay in America. "Ironically, the art piece in question portrays exactly what occurred at the National Greeley Art Exhibition and what sadly happens too often in this country involving discrimination against gays."

Tennesen said the controversial subject isn't the problem. "We have every age group here looking at the ex-

hibits from teenagers to senior citizens. A huge percentage of them would have found the artwork repulsive. It wasn't the subject matter. ... It was the way it was presented," he said.

McEachern said the Greeley

Art Association, which staged the exhibition, shouldn't have such exhibits in banks.

"Artistic freedom is threatened when art is challenged because of its content message or viewpoint, rather than because

of its aesthetic qualities or artistic merit," she said.

Francis Denning, an artist and chairman of the committee that oversees the art show, said he often champions gay rights. "I am not homophobic," he said.



r. Hill

There will be a Celebration of Life Monday, May 10, 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the Retired Enlisted Association at 834 Emory Circle, Colorado Springs. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the American Heart Association, 1280 South Parker Road, Denver, Colorado 80231, 1-866-425-0454.

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